

North Moluccan Malay

North Moluccan Malay (also known as **Ternate Malay**) is a Malay-based creole language spoken on Ternate, Tidore, Halmahera, and Sula Islands, North Maluku for intergroup communications. The local name of the language is *Bahasa Pasar*, and the name Ternate Malay is also used, after the main ethnic group speaking the language. Since North Moluccan Malay is used primarily for spoken communication, there is no standardized orthography.

A large percentage of this language's lexicon has been borrowed from Ternatean, such as, *ngana* "you (sg.)", *ngoni* "you (pl.)", *bifi* "ant" and *ciri* "to fall", and its syntax and semantics have received heavy influence from the surrounding West Papuan languages.^[3] Other vernacular forms of Malay spoken in eastern Indonesia, such as Manado Malay and Papuan Malay, are said to be derived from an earlier form of North Moluccan Malay.^[4]

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North Moluccan Malay	
<i>Bahasa Pasar</i>	
Native to	Indonesia
Region	North Maluku
Native speakers	700,000 (2001) ^[1]
Language family	Malay Creole <ul style="list-style-type: none">East Indonesian<ul style="list-style-type: none">North Moluccan Malay
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	max
Glottolog	nort2828 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/nort2828) ^[2]

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Phonology

Vowels

The vowel system of North Moluccan Malay consists of five vowel phonemes and five diphthongs.^{[5]:15}

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Back</u>
<u>High</u>	i	u
<u>Mid</u>	e	o
<u>Low</u>		a

The five diphthongs are /ai/, /ae/, /ao/, /oi/ and /ei/.^{[5]:15}

Consonants

North Moluccan Malay has eighteen consonants and two semivowels.^{[5]:19}

	<u>Labial</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
<u>Nasal</u>	m	n	ɲ	ŋ	
<u>Plosive</u>	p b	t d	c ɟ	k g	ʔ
<u>Fricative</u>	f	s			h
<u>Lateral</u>		l			
<u>Trill</u>		r			
<u>Semivowel</u>	w		j		

Grammar

Possession

In Ternate Malay, words do not align its forms with its grammatical roles; therefore, the functions of words are often determined by linguistic context and non-linguistic situation. In this case, possessions are often used as a tool to determine the borders of constituents for the sake of successful interpretation of word meanings and functions.^{[5]:41}

Generally, words in Ternate Malay are often constructed in head-initial structure, except from the two possessive constructions – *Y pe X constructions* and *YX constructions*, where words are constructed in head-final structure.^{[5]:59}

Y pe X constructions

In the *Y pe X construction*, the Y element refers to the modifier (possessor) while the X element refers to the head (possessum). The possessor and possessum are connected by *pe*, in which the possessum expresses *de facto* a nominal meaning. In English, the *Y pe X constructions* gives the meaning of ‘Y’s X’ and ‘the X or Y’.^{[5]:59}

According to Litamahuputty,^{[5]:92} *Y pe X construction* can express different meanings ranging from possession in animate subjects and inanimate subjects to non-possessive meanings. The examples below are extracted from Litamahuputty^{[5]:92–98} to illustrate situations when *Y pe X construction* is used to express possessions.

Non-human relationships

X is part of Y

In example (1), *tong pe kaki* is a possessive construction where the possessor *tong* ‘the first person plural – our’ is connected to the possessum *kaki* ‘leg’ using *pe*. Together, the construction gives the meaning of ‘our leg’, in which the leg is a part of ‘our’ body, demonstrating the relationship of ‘X is part of Y’

Example (1):

ka sana, de poloso **tong pe kaki**.

to there 3SG squeeze 1PL POSS leg

when we go there, she massages our legs ^{[5]:3}

X is a product of Y

In example (2), *ular pe bias* is a possessive construction where the possessor *ular* ‘snake’ is connected to the possessum *bias* ‘venom’ using *pe*. Together, the construction means ‘the snake’s venom’, in which the venom is produced by the snake, demonstrating the relationship of ‘X is a product of Y’.

Example (2):

baru de buka **ular pe bisa...**

then 3SG open snake POSS poison

then he takes out the snake’s venom ^{[5]:94}

X is a feature of Y

In example (3), *motor pe warna* is a possessive construction where the possessor *motor* ‘motorcycle’ is connected to the possessum *warna* ‘colour’ using *pe*. Together, the construction gives the meaning of ‘the colour of the motorcycle’, in which the colour is one of the features (such as shape, model, engine...etc.) of

the motorcycle, demonstrating the relationship of ‘X is a feature of Y’.

Example (3):

motor pe warna deng dia sama.

motorcycle POSS colour and 3SG same

the colour of the motorcycle and him are the same.^{[5]:95}

Human relationships

Social relationship

In example (4), *bank pe bini* is a possessive construction where the possessor *bank* ‘bank employee’ is connected to the possessum *bini* ‘wife’ using *pe*. Together, the construction brings the meaning of ‘the bank employees’ wives’, which expresses the social relationship between the humane animates.

Example (4):

kalo dong lia ibu-ibu bank ka...

when 3PL see RED-mother bank or

when they see bank employees or

-

bank pe bini, orang-orang di bank,

bank POSS wife RED-person in bank

the wives of bank employees, employees at the bank,^{[5]:95}

Kinship relationship

In example (5), *Fadin de kaka* is a possessive construction where the possessor *Fadin* (a proper noun) is connected to the possessum *kaka* ‘older sibling’. Together, the construction gives the meaning of ‘Fadin’s older brother’, which expresses the kinship relationship between the two humane animates.

Example (5):

Fadin pe kaka ni.

Fadin POSS older.sibling this

he’s Fadin’s older brother^{[5]:93}

Time relationships

Future relationship

Example (6) is about a story of how the speaker accidentally spilled hot oil on himself.

In the possessive construction *de pe beso*, the possessor *de* 'third person singular' refers to the day of incident, where the possessum *beso* 'tomorrow' refers to the day after the incident. Future time relationship is shown between the day of incident and the day after the incident.

Example (6):

eh, **de pe beso** kita kage nae.

EXCL 3SG POSS tomorrow 1SG startled go.up

gee, the next morning I woke up in a shock.^{[5]:97}

Past relationship

Example (7) is about the journey of the speaker and his friends in an island where he heard a strange voice.

In the possessive construction *de pe kalamareng malang*, the possessor *de* 'third person singular' refers to the moment when the speaker was talking, where the possessum *kalamareng malang* 'yesterday night' refers to the night before that moment, demonstrating past time relationship between the time when the speaker heard strange voice and the time he talked.

Example (7):

baru **de pe kalamareng malang** tu

moreover 3SG POSS yesterday night that

moreover, last night

-

kita ada dengar orang pe suara.

1SG exist hear person POSS voice

I heard someone's voice^{[5]:97}

Human Quality

Quality

In Example (8), *de pe bae* is a possessive expression where the possessor *de* 'third person singular – his' is connected to the possesum *bae* 'kindness' with *pe*. The expression has the meaning of 'his kindness', demonstrating a quality of the humane subject.

This relationship is similar to **X is a feature of Y** which was demonstrated earlier, where example (8) refers to an animate and example (3) refers to an inanimate.

Example (8):

kita inga **de pe bae** skali.

1SG remember 3SG POSS good very

I always remember his kindness.^{[5]:98}

From the above examples, it can be seen that wide ranges of possessions, including possessions in human, animals, objects or even abstract items like time, can be demonstrated from the *Y pe X constructions*.

As mentioned earlier, word functions in Ternate Malay are often determined from contexts rather than word forms. Therefore, not all *Y pe X constructions* show possessive meanings. The examples below demonstrate situations where *Y pe X construction* is used to express meanings other than possession, for example, to express evaluative meanings or additional information:^{[5]:99–102}

When the possessum (X) denotes a quality with exclamative markers, it has an evaluative meaning rather than a possessive meaning.

In example (9), the Y element in the *Y pe X construction* ‘*ngana pe capat*’ is *ngana*, which refers to ‘second person singular’; and the X element is *capa*’, which refers to ‘fast’.

Since the sentence is expressed in exclamative intonations, which can be shown from the exclamation mark used at the end of the sentence and the use of *ih* (*the exclamative expression*), the construction has the evaluative meaning of ‘*how fast you are!*’ rather than a possessive meaning of referring the ‘quality of fastness’ to the subject.

Example (9):

ih, Anwar, **ngana pe capat!**

EXCL Anwar 2SG POSS fast

gee, Anwar, you’re fast!^{[5]:99}

When the possessum (X) denotes an action or activity, it supplies additional information to the action or activity rather than showing possessions.

In example (10), the Y element in the *Y pe X construction* ‘*paitua pe cuci balangang*’ is *paitua*, which refers to ‘old man’; and the X element is *cuci balangan*, which refers to ‘to wash a wok’.

The example provided extra information on what surprised the speaker rather than showing possession between the old man and his way of washing a wok.

Example (10):

paitua pe cuci balangang kita herang.

old.man POSS wash wok 1SG surprised

the way he washed the wok surprised me.^{[5]:100}

YX constructions

In the *YX construction*, the Y element refers to the modifier (possessor), which is often a personal pronoun or a kinship term; and the X element refers to the head (possessum), which is often a thing word. The construction also has a meaning of ‘Y’s X’ and ‘the X or Y’ in English.^{[5]:102} The examples below are

extracted from Litamahuputty,^{[5]:103–104} which demonstrated the use of element Y as a personal pronoun and kinship term in *YX constructions*:

Possessor Y as a personal pronoun

Example (11) has demonstrated the use of *YX construction* with element Y as a personal pronoun, where the possessor *dong* refers to ‘*third person plural*’ and the possessum *parau* refers to ‘*boat*’. Together, it has the meaning of ‘*their boat*’.

Example (11):

ikang bawa **dong** parau.

fish bring 3PL boat

a fish is pulling their boat ^{[5]:104}

Possessor Y as a kinship term

Example (12) has demonstrated the use of *YX construction* with element Y as a kinship term, where the possessor *tete* refers to grandfather and the possessum *papa* refers to father. Together, the expression has the meaning of ‘*the grandfather’s father*’, demonstrating the kinship relationship.

Example (12):

tete **papa** orang Ternate.

grandfather father person Ternate

my grandfather’s father is a person from Ternate. ^{[5]:103}

Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns in North Moluccan Malay only distinguish between person (first, second and third person) and number (singular and plural). Some pronouns can also be used to show respect to other speakers. ^{[5]:142}

Person	Singular		Plural	
	Full	Shortened	Full	Shortened
1	kita saya (respectful)	-	(ki)torang	tong
2	ngana	-	ngoni	-
3	dia	de	dorang	dong

Politeness

The use of the first person singular pronouns *kita* and *saya* is dependent on the speech situation. *Kita* is used when talking to others of the same or lower age, rank or status. On the other hand, *saya* is used in more formal situations or when conversing with someone with a higher rank or status, to show respect to the other

person.^{[5]:143}

The second person singular and plural pronouns, *ngana* and *ngoni* also share a similar distinction. *Ngana* is used to refer to an addressee if they of the same or lower age, rank or status. Otherwise speakers may use personal names or kinship terms to refer to the addressee.^{[5]:144} Alternatively, the plural second person pronoun *ngoni* can occasionally be used to refer to a single addressee respectfully, although it is typically reserved for addressing a group of people.^{[5]:147}

These distinctions are demonstrated in example (1) where the speaker telling his friends of a situation where he explains to a woman that he does not want to accept money for helping to carry her shopping onto the bus. Since he is talking to his friends he refers to himself as *kita*, but because he is not familiar with the woman he uses the more respectful *saya* to refer to himself and *ngoni* to address her.

(1) *kita bilang, "Ibu... saya bantu saja pa ngoni."*

1SG say mother 1SG assist only to 2

"I said: 'Madam, I'm only helping you.'"^{[5]:143}

Full and shortened forms

For pronouns with a full and shortened form, the two forms may be used interchangeably in most contexts. However, following the conjunction *deng* or prepositions (such as *di*, *ka*, *dari* or *pa*) only the full form may be used.^{[5]:142} This is seen in example (2) where the short form *de* is used except following the preposition *pa*, where the full forms *dia* and *torang* appear instead:

(2) *tikus ini, kalo manakal pa dia, de manakal pa torang.*

mouse this when be.naughty to 3SG 3SG be.naughty to 1PL

"this mouse, if we harm it, it will harm us"^{[5]:145}

In addition, the shortened forms do not appear post-verbally (i.e. after predicates).^{[5]:144–147} Hence in the following example *tong* cannot appear after the verb *bunu* "kill", only the full form *torang* is allowed:

(3) *iblis tara mungkin bunu torang*

devil NEG possible kill 1PL

"it's impossible for a devil to kill us"^{[5]:146}

The full form of the first person plural pronoun *torang* is actually a shortening of *kitorang* which is sometimes used by older speakers however younger speakers rarely use this form.^{[5]:145}

The only exceptions to the two restrictions mentioned above is when the pronoun is part of a Y *pe* X possessive construction in which case the shortened form may be used as the possessor Y.^{[5]:142} Example (4) shows a possessive Y *pe* X construction containing the first person plural short form pronoun *dong* occurring after a preposition *pa*:

(4) *tong brenti pas pa dong pe muka.*

1PL stop exact to 3PL POSS face

"we stopped precisely in front of them."^{[5]:148}

Similarly, example (5) shows the third person singular short form pronoun *de* occurring after the verb *iko* "follow" also as part of a Y *pe* X possessive construction. This contrasts with the use of the full form *dia* after the second instance of *iko*, where the pronoun is no longer part of a possessive construction:

(5) *de pe lalar iko de pe luka, bukaŋ iko dia.*
 3SG POSS fly follow 3SG POSS wound NEG follow 3SG
 "the flies are following his wounds, they are not following him."^{[5]:145}

Negation

North Moluccan Malay uses predicate operators to express negation (negators). Predicate operators are used to express certain meaning aspects, they also act as a grammatical function by showing that the construction in which they take part in is best to be interpreted as predicate. *tara* 'not (present)' and *bukaŋ* 'not' are two negators that are frequently used to negate predicates in this language.^{[5]:222}

tara implies absolute absence 'not present'; however, while used in negating thing constructions contexts, *tara* could mean 'not possess'. On the other hand, *bukaŋ* implies a contradiction 'not A, (but B)'. In negating thing constructions, *bukaŋ* negates the identity of the thing and implies an alternative.^{[5]:222}

Negator *tara*

Examples of the usage of negator *tara* 'not (present)' can be seen in the following sentences.^{[5]:222–223}

Example (1) shows negator *tara* preceding predicate *tidor* 'sleep', this results *tara tidor* 'not sleep'.

(1) *kita bilang, "ngana tara tidor?"*.
 1SG say 2SG NEG sleep
I asked, "aren't you going to sleep?".^{[5]:222}

In example (2), the predicate *sadiki* 'a little' refers to a small amount. Preceded by negator *tara*, *tara sadiki* 'not a little' refers to the subject of the example *de pe sajara* 'the history', which has a Y *pe* X possession construction. *tara sadiki* 'not a little' in this case describes the amount of the subject as the entity.

(2) *de pe sajara tara sadiki.*
 3SG POSS history NEG a.little
the stories he has are not just a few.^{[5]:223}

Example (3) shows *tara* negating predicate *dua* 'two' which refers to an amount. In this case, *tara dua* 'there are no two (of them)' works as an expression which means that something has no equal. The subject *kita pe mara ni* 'my anger' expresses the entity that it has no (second) equivalent.

(3) *ih, kita pe mara ni tara dua.*
 EXCL 1SG POSS angry this NEG two
gee, I was so angry. (Lit. 'my anger does not have an equivalent')^{[5]:223}

Example (4) displays *tara* with the meaning 'not possess'. The predicate consists of negator *tara* 'not' preceding *cewe* 'girl' resulting *tara cewe* 'no girl(friend)'. This predicate describes the state of subject *kita* 'first person singular' which make the meaning 'not possess' of *tara* relevant. This results *tara cewe* to have the meaning 'do not have a girl(friend)'.

(4) *cek, kita tara cewe.*
 EXCL 1SG NEG girl
gee, I don't have a girlfriend.^{[5]:223}

Similar to example (4), example (5) shows the sense of 'not possess' of *tara*. The story of example (5) is that the speaker thought that he was offered tea when it was actually instant coffee. The explanation is that he was not familiar with instant coffee since he usually drank coffee that had coffee dregs in it. In this example, the predicate is constructed of negator *tara* and *ampas* 'dregs', this results *tara ampas* '(there are) no dregs' which in this situation *ampas* is coffee dregs.

- (5) me, **tara** **ampas**.
 PART NEG dregs
 It didn't have any dregs.^{[5]:223}

Negator *tara* also has variations, one of them is when it precedes *ada* 'be present' then it can merge into *tarada* 'not present'. Generally, *tara ada* 'not be present' and *tarada* can be used interchangeably; however, some speaker might have clear distinction between the two.^{[5]:223}

Example (6) shows that the predicate consists of negator *tara* and *ada* resulting *tara ada* 'not present'. The predicate precede the subject *aer* 'water', therefore it has a predicate-subject construction of *tara ada aer* 'there is no water'.

- (6) [...] kolam mandi-mandi cuma **tara ada aer**.
 pool RED-bathe only NEG exist water
 [...] *a bathing pool, but there was no water.*^{[5]:223}

Example (7) has *tarada* as its predicate. The example consisted of two clauses, the first one *samua tikus kacili* 'all mice are small' which describes the size of the mice. The second clause consists of predicate *tarada* and *yang basar* 'big ones' (with the information from the previous clause, this refers to the mice). This also constructs a predicate-subject construction as found in example (6), which results *tarada yang basar* 'there are no big ones'.

- (7) samua tikus kacili **tarada yang basar**.
 all mouse small NEG REL big
 all mice are small, there are no big ones.^{[5]:223}

tarada could also act as the negative response to questions, this function could be applied to example (8). In this example, the speaker gives two alternatives of the possible results of a soccer player kicking a ball. The first alternative is that there would be a *gol* 'goal', while the second one there wouldn't *tarada* 'not (present)'. *tarada* 'no' could be used give this question a negative answer.^{[5]:223}

- (8) gol ka **tarada?**
 goal or NEG
 would there be a goal or not? ^{[5]:224}

tar is another variation of *tara*, which is a shorten form of it. *tar* can immediately precede a predicate and no other lexical material can intervene. It seems that *tar* is in a progress of becoming a bound element *tar-* to express negation.^{[5]:224}

Example (9) shows the use of *tar* as the shortened form of *tara* in the predicate which is then followed by *tau* 'know'. This results *tar tau* 'not know'.

- (9) Allah, tong **tar** **tau**.
 Allah 1PL NEG know
 oh my God, we didn't know that.^{[5]:224}

Negator *bukang*

Negator *bukang* means 'not A, (but B)', it implies that the opposite or the alternative of the expressed is prominent. It is not obligatory to overtly express the opposite or alternative.^{[5]:224}

Example (10) has a story of a man to be mistaken as a porter, therefore he explained that he was not. The example has negator *bukang* preceding *ana-ana baangka* 'porter', this results *bukang ana-ana baangka* 'not a porter'. In this example, *ana-ana baangka* is the negated scope.

(10) saya tara... **bukang** ana-ana ba-angka."

1SG NEG NEG PL-child DUR-lift.up

I'm no..., I'm not a porter.^{[5]:225}

Different from example (10) that doesn't imply explicitly the alternative or opposite, example (11) states clearly the alternative of the negated thing. Example (11) has a story of someone asking the speaker if there is actually a snake in his garden. The speaker then answer the question using *bukang* which negates *di atas*, *di atas* refers to a location on the hill. The alternative or the opposite is stated as *di bawa barangka* 'at the lower part, at the ditch'.^{[5]:225}

(11) ada, tapi **bukang** di atas, di bawah barangka.

be.present but NEG in top in bottom ditch

yes, there are, not up the hill, but down at the ditch.^{[5]:225}

Example (12) displays a case where *bukang* negates a clause. The story of example (12) is about a boat that seem to be moving by itself, which then the real cause is explained. *bukang* precedes *dong panggayung* 'they paddle' in order to perform negation. The alternative, which in this case is the real reason of the situation, is stated as *ikang kase lari dong parao* 'a fish takes away their boat'. The negation scope in this example is on the people who paddle the boat, because it was actually the fish that moved the boat instead of the people.^{[5]:225}

(12) padahal **bukang** dong panggayung...

whereas NEG 3PL paddle

while they're not paddling...^{[5]:225}

(12) ikang kase lari dong parao, ikang basar.

fish give run 3PL boat fish big

a fish is taking away their boat, a big fish.^{[5]:225}

List of abbreviations

Gloss	Meaning
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
DUR	durative aspect, continuous aspect
EXCL	exclusive
NEG	negation, negative
PART	participle, particle, partitive case
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
RED	reduplication
REL	relative(izer)
SG	singular

See also

- Ambonese Malay
- Papuan Malay
- Serui Malay

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